

Book: *Delivering Healthcare in America: A Systems Approach*

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Review

This textbook gave an excellent overview of the U.S. healthcare system. In fact, I believe I studied the First Edition of this text when I was working towards my Masters Degree in Healthcare Administration ten years ago. Ten years ago the text book seemed overwhelming because it contained such a large volume of information. However, after 10 more years in the field the text provided an excellent review of our healthcare system which I felt would be a great way to prepare for AAMA members preparing to take their certification exam.

Several aspects of the text were strengths. The learning objectives at the beginning of each chapter were a great tool for keeping the reader focused. The first chapter set the scene for the rest of the text by giving an overview of our health care system. The four functional components of any healthcare system are described financial, insurance, delivery and payment. The reader also receives historical background on how our U.S. system evolved over the years through the inception of MEDICARE and MEDICAID. The U.S. system is compared and contrasted to how other nations deliver care. In fact, the U.S. system is described very critically in regard to the amount of our economy is spent on healthcare and still the significant percentage of citizens who are uninsured.

The overall text is divided into 14 chapters which consist of five distinct parts. After the first chapter which is an overview the authors launch us into Part I: System Foundations. Part I discusses American's beliefs and values regarding their healthcare system followed by the evolution of our current system.

Part II of the text is System Resources. Chapter 4 goes into describing all the healthcare professionals working in healthcare and their distinct roles and what they contribute. The next chapter on medical technology reviews the advances the U.S. has made in technology and presents the challenge to deciding when medical technology is strength and when it is too great a cost to our system. Chapter 6 introduces our very complex healthcare financing processes including the various ways citizens can be insured.

Part III of the text on System processes is the longest section of the text. This section examines different delivery locations of healthcare including outpatient settings, inpatient settings, managed care delivery systems, long term care options and services available for

our society's special populations (e.g. children, rural, homeless, chronically ill). The last decades increase in the volume of care provided in ambulatory care settings is explored.

Part IV which addresses System Outcomes really makes the reader think hard especially about the trade offs between cost, quality and access and how to optimize all three of these very vital aspects to healthcare. The final Part V System Outlook looks to the future of healthcare and makes some predictions on how the current trends will development in the next 5 to 10 years. Managed Care is definitely here to stay and adaptations must continue on the part of the insurers, employers, employees and physicians to continue to improve the managed care system that over 95% of the privately insured population use today.

Two additional features of the book that were appealing were the comic at the beginning of each chapter that was very appropriate for the chapters content and thought provoking while at the same time added some levity to somewhat dry material. Also, the figures were well thought out and clearly presented and greatly added to the value of this text.